

Americas Utilities: Water - infrastructure spend, completed system acquisitions provide LT growth visibility; Buy on AWK, WTRG (on CL)

Following 4Q2020 earnings, we remain Buy-rated on regulated water utilities American Water (AWK) and Essential Utilities (WTRG, on CL) as we see continued visibility into long-term investment growth from both organic infrastructure modernization and completed municipal system acquisitions, supported by an increasing state/federal focus on water quality and reliability.

Thus far in 2021, in a backdrop where the XLU has underperformed the S&P 500 by 8% driven by rising 10yr bond yields (albeit still at a relatively low ~1.5%), AWK/WTRG shares have declined around 6%/9% on an absolute basis while underperforming the XLU by 1%/4%, respectively. We believe this is driven somewhat by rotation into more value-oriented stocks within our sector, versus anything fundamental to the companies' growth propositions. We view the recent underperformance for both stocks providing a more compelling entry opportunity to gain exposure to these secular winners with a positive ESG footprint, with our \$179/\$55 price target for AWK/WTRG implying 28%/33% total return, respectively, versus 23% for Regulated Utilities.

WTRG: Water utility expansion, methane reduction strategy fuel growth; remain Buy (on CL)

We stay Buy-rated (on Conviction List) following 4Q2020 earnings on regulated water/gas utility Essential Utilities (WTRG), as we continue to see valuations not fully reflecting the company's primarily water utility exposure, and our expectation for the company to achieve the upper end of its 5-7% EPS CAGR. We believe WTRG's organic/inorganic water growth plans and de-carbonization strategy at its gas utility - as laid out in its January 2021 investor update call - should continue to bolster the case for WTRG as still one of the ESG-friendly stories in our coverage universe. In the near term, we note the pending \$276mn DELCORA wastewater system acquisition - with the PA commission decision expected in March - and if completed we expect the Agua PA utility to file a base rate case later this year. Finally, while WTRG mentioned moderate 1Q21 costs related to their Texas water utilities during the February winter weather event, we note the state represents roughly 6% of total rate base, with management not expecting a net impact to their

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2021 guidance forecast.

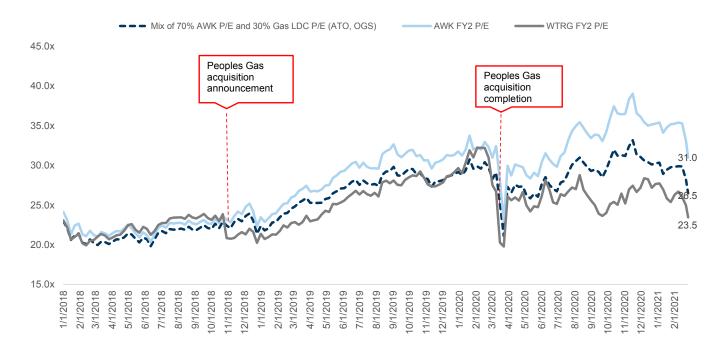
We maintain our 2021/2022 estimates while introducing 2023/2024 EPS estimates of \$1.93/\$2.05, respectively, reflecting a 6.7% CAGR from 2020A-2024E and a 7.1% CAGR from the weather-normal 2020 result of \$1.56. We continue to embed issuance of the ~\$300mn forward equity in 1Q2021 along with the close of the pending DELCORA municipal acquisition; we also assume \$200mn of annual equity to finance future organic/acquisition investments while improving WTRG's FFO/debt from 12% in 2021 to 13% by 2024. Our model reflects the water utilities earning moderately below authorized, along with Peoples Gas ROEs trending down to authorized levels by 2024 (given wind-down of tax repairs and an assumed base rate increase in 2024).

Our \$55, 12-month price target (unchanged) is based on a SOTP approach, with 35x/21x P/E applied to our 2022 water/gas utility EPS estimates, and 30x blended P/E on 2022 Other EPS, respectively. Downside risks to our call include: 1) PA regulation turns less constructive, which impacts earnings growth potential given the bulk of WTRG's earnings are derived from the state's water/gas operations, 2) water system acquisitions do not receive necessary approvals for completion, which could impact longer-term water rate base growth outlook barring replacement with other municipal acquisitions, and 3) longer-term growth concerns about the gas utility segment further compresses WTRG's valuation, both on an absolute basis and relative to pure-play water utilities.

WTRG in Exhibits

Exhibit 1: We continue to see WTRG's valuations not fully reflecting its 70%/30% water/gas profile

FY2 P/E for AWK, WTRG, and an illustrative performance of a 70%/30% water/gas utility



ATO/OGS chosen as illustrative gas utility comps based on company profile, including their status as the two largest gas LDCs by market cap; forward P/Es based on Factset consensus

Source: FactSet, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

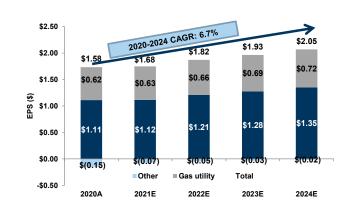
Exhibit 2: We maintain our 2021/2022 estimates, while introducing 2023/2024...

EPS New vs Old vs Consensus

EPS Estimates						
	New	Old	Cons			
2021E	\$1.68	\$1.68	\$1.67			
2022E	\$1.82	.82 \$1.82 \$1				
2023E	\$1.93		\$1.89			
2024E	\$2.05		\$2.05			

% Difference			
vs Old	vs Cons		
0%	1%		
0%	2%		
	2%		
	0%		

Exhibit 3: ...implying near-7% EPS CAGR through 2024 EPS CAGR, 2020A-2024E

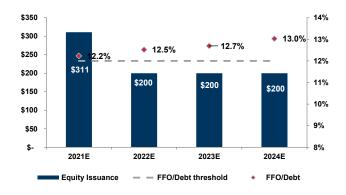


Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research, Thomson Reuters

Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 4: We assume annual equity issuances to support organic/inorganic growth while improving the balance sheet

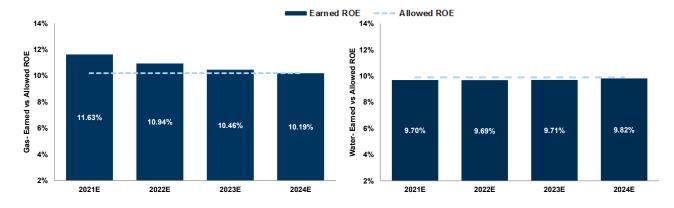
Equity issuance and FFO/debt



Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 5: We assume the water utilities earn close to their allowed ROEs, while incorporating more robust (but moderating) ROEs for gas utilities given election of repairs tax in PA

Earned vs Allowed ROEs



Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 6: Our SOTP-based \$55 price target reflects a 33% total return potential versus 22% on average for our Regulated Utilities WTRG SOTP Valuation

VALUATION	
Water utility EPS 2022	1.21
Water utility multiple	30.00x
Assumed premium	5.00x
Adjusted P/E	35.0x
Water utility valuation	42.30
Gas utility EPS 2022	0.66
Gas utility multiple	19.00x
Assumed premium	2.00x
Adjusted P/E	21.0x
Gas utility valuation	13.93
Valuation - Other	(0.05)
2020 Blended multiple	30.04x
Other valuation	(1.50)
Total valuation	55.00

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

AWK: Best-in-class EPS/DPS growth with ESG tailwind; Buy

We stay Buy-rated on AWK post 4Q2020 earnings and Analyst Day given best-in-class EPS and dividend growth. We remain positive on AWK given its status as the only large cap, pure play, publicly traded water utility in the US, as well as its best-in-class ~8.5%+ EPS growth through 2024 driven by robust organic and inorganic water investment opportunities. In addition, we look favorably on the company's increased forecast for water/wastewater municipal system acquisitions that should further support AWK's predominantly regulated utility profile. Finally, we expect the stock to continue to benefit from a scarcity premium and ESG friendly profile that should continue to drive its premium valuation.

We tweak our 2021/2022 EPS estimates while introducing 2023/2024 estimates of \$4.98/\$5.40, respectively, implying an 8.4% CAGR from 2021A-2024E. Our model assumes \$300mn/\$200mn/\$200mn of equity from 2022-2024, resulting in a 59% net debt/cap ratio and ~17% FFO/debt by 2024, along with earned ROEs of 9.2-9.3% at the Regulated segment versus 9.8% authorized.

Our \$179, 12-month price target (unchanged) embeds our water base P/E multiple of 30.0x, as well as a 9x (30%) premium to account for AWK's above-average growth and favorable ESG profile, on our 2022 EPS. Key risks include water quality issues, cost management, regulatory environment, growth at non-regulated segments and reduced

ESG fund flows.

AWK in Exhibits

Exhibit 7: We tweak our 2021/2022 estimates while introducing 2023/2024...

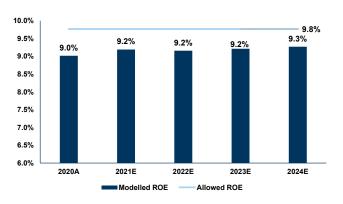
EPS New vs Old vs Consensus

EPS Estimates			% Difference		
	New	Old	Consensus	vs Old	vs Consensus
2021E	\$4.24	\$4.25	\$4.23	0%	0%
2022E	\$4.60	\$4.59	\$4.58	0%	0%
2023E	\$4.98		\$4.98		0%
2024E	\$5.40		\$5.46		-1%

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research, Thomson Reuters

Exhibit 9: Our estimates reflect moderate regulatory lag versus authorized ROEs

Authorized versus earned ROEs



Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 11: Our price target embeds our water base P/E multiple of 30x and a premium to account for AWK's above-average growth and ESG profile

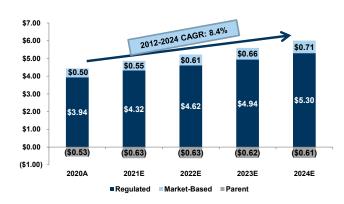
AWK valuation

AWK Valuation	
AWK 2022 EPS	\$4.60
GS Water Utility Base Multiple	30.0x
Premium / (Discount)	9.0x
Adjusted P/E	39.0x
Utility Valuation	\$179
AWK Valuation	\$179

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

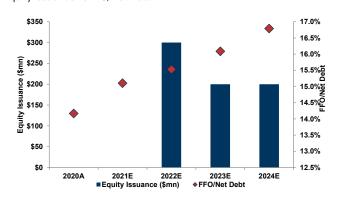
Exhibit 8: ...which reflect a best-in-class 8.4% EPS CAGR from 2020A-2024E

EPS CAGR, 2020-2024



Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 10: We do assume annual equity issuances from 2022-2024, supporting regulated growth while improving the balance sheet Equity issuance vs FFO/Net Debt



Source: Company data, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

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Reg AC

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